



Honors Course Descriptions Fall 2008

Listing of Fall 2008 honors courses:

- *ENGL 030S, Freshman Composition (3 credits, GWS)
Section 601, MWF 11:30AM-12:20PM
- *L ST 100H, Information Search Strategy (1 credit)
Section 601, by appointment
- *STS 130H, World Food Problems (1 credit),
Section 601, meets 08/18 9AM-4PM and 08/20 Noon-5PM
Work begins in the summer with a summer read and assignments
- *HONOR 301H, The Role of Knowledge in Society (3 credits)
Section 601, MWF 1:30PM-2:20PM
- *PHIL 107H, Introduction to Philosophy of Technology (3 credits, GH)
Section 601, TR 1:00PM-2:15PM

Advanced planning for the Spring 2009-Fall 2009 year:

Spring 2009

- *ENGL 263H, Reading Poetry (3 credits, GH)
- *LING 001H, The Study of Language (3 credits, GS/US/IL)
- GEOSC 021H, Earth and Life: Biodiversity and Earth History (3 credits, GN)
- *L ST 301H, Information Research Methods and Systems (1 credit)
- YFE 211H, Foundations: Civic and Community Engagement (3 credits, GS/US/IL)

Fall 2009

- *ENGL 030S, Freshman Composition (3 credits, GWS)
- *L ST 100H, Information Search Strategy (1 credit)
- *STS 130H, World Food Problems (1 credit)
- *HONOR 301H, The Role of Knowledge in Society (3 credits)
- One additional honors course

*denotes courses offered only in the honors program

- Courses required for all entering first-semester honors freshmen (Cooper and Schreyer Scholars) include ENGL 030S and L ST 100H and STS 130H.
- L ST 301H is a thesis preparation course required for all honors students (Cooper and Schreyer) in the second semester of the junior year.
- HONOR 301H is required for all honors scholars during the fall semester of the sophomore or junior year.

Descriptions for Fall 2008 courses:

ENGL 030S, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Associate Professor of English and Linguistics

English 030 is an intensive writing course that will approach writing through the exploration of class and culture; we can't understand one without understanding the other. The course will encourage us to think more deeply about social issues in the United States, and the texts Nickel and Dimed and Class Matters will form the basis of these thoughts and discussions. We will begin our discussion by examining the ordinary details of our lives - from the classroom to the jobs we hold, from our families to the parties we attend, from our holidays to our first dates. We will learn to understand our individual actions and attitudes, and then we will question, challenge and, perhaps, even re-think them.

L ST 100H, Sara Whildin, Associate Librarian

This course explores concepts and methodology for determining information needs and planning efficient strategies to locate information in a library. Specifically, we are seeking to develop several of the skills associated with information literacy. Information literacy is a set of intellectual skills and values that integrate critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making into the retrieval, evaluation and use of information. In this course we seek to develop all the skills that define an information literate individual. An information literate individual is able to:

- * Determine the nature and extent of information needed
- * Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- * Evaluate information and its sources critically
- * Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- * Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- * Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

In the course of developing these skills you will learn to use the following tools:

- LIAS (Libraries Information Access System)
- The CAT (catalog of Penn State Libraries Holdings)
- World CAT (union catalog of worldwide libraries)
- ILLIAD (the online interlibrary loan system)
- Citation formats
- Online databases providing access to periodical articles, data, and images

STS 130H, Dr. Laura Guertin and Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Honors Coordinators

This course serves as a required honors orientation for all new Cooper and Schreyer Scholars (regardless of class year) and your first true introduction to the topic of environmental sustainability and the connection to democratic practices. There are many topics we will cover in the context of environmental sustainability democracy, such as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations meeting their needs. Food production and consumption are high-priorities. From organic foods to Frankenfoods, this course will explore how we can make a difference in creating

a sustainable society and how democratic practices can dictate the future direction of food resources locally and globally.

HONOR 301H, Dr. Laura Guertin and Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Honors Coordinators

This course is interdisciplinary study of a topic utilizing contributions from science/engineering, business, public policy, behavioral sciences/education, and the humanities. In addition, this course serves to prepare honors scholars with the professional research skills needed to succeed on campus and beyond. The course will cover how to write an abstract, prepare and submit a manuscript for publication, construct an oral and poster presentation, and etiquette appropriate for a professional conference. This course is required for all scholars in the sophomore or junior year.

PHIL 107H, Dr. David Macauley, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies

This course will involve a close examination of the philosophical aspects of modern technology, with a particular focus on the relation and effects of technology upon the environment. Through a consideration of material drawn from philosophy as well as ecology and political thought, we will explore the impact of technology upon the landscape, animals, place, and both human and nonhuman nature. As a class, we will interrogate the ways in which human artifacts and machines create, regulate or control our experiences of and interactions with the environment and alter our images and ideas of nature, the earth, nonhumans, and human communities. We will also attempt to identify and understand more environmentally friendly technologies.

Students will be encouraged to set up and pursue research and writing projects as they relate to their chosen fields of study. We will also make an effort to apply our knowledge to the local community and to the campus in particular through, for example, conducting energy audits of buildings or working to make the university “greener” by re-thinking some of our basic assumptions and actions toward the world. As a class, we will take at least one field to visit, for example, The Franklin Institute; or local sites of sustainable green architecture and technology.

In addition to the emphasis upon the environment, we will—given time or interest—explore technology’s relation to and effect upon the body, conceptions of the self and time, construction of social space and knowledge. In the process, we will discuss specific technologies such as the written word and the printing press, clocks, hand tools, the phone, the computer, television, automobiles and genetic engineering as well as questions connected with surveillance, cyborgs, authority and death. We will look at attempts and movements to develop appropriate, ecological or human scale technology and to use technology to reintegrate us with or modify the existing environment.

A sampling of a few broad issues and questions we will likely investigate include:

- Has the microwave oven helped to undermine family life by changing eating habits?
- How have TVs, cars and computers altered the way we interact with the world?
- Are genetically modified organisms threats to our food supply solutions to famine?
- Do we control technology, or does it control us? Are technologies neutral or political?
- Do nonhuman animals use technology? What exactly is technology anyway?
- Should I be concerned about the technological invasion of privacy?

- Has any culture resisted a technological invention?
- How has technology changed our views of time, space, speed, death and sex?
- Do men and women relate to technology in different ways? If so, why?
- Does technology evolve like living organisms? Are we evolving with technology?
- Can machines acquire intelligence?
- Should we clone humans or nonhumans?
- What can we learn from films like “The Matrix,” “The Terminator,” or “Frankenstein” about technology?



Honors Course Descriptions Spring 2009

ENGL 263H, Dr. Adam Sorkin, Distinguished Professor of English

GEOSC 021H, Dr. Laura Guertin, Associate Professor of Earth Science and Honors Coordinator

This course is an exploration of the 4.6 billion years of Earth's history. We will explore the changes in geography, climate and life from the first fish through dinosaurs to the woolly mammoths. We will spend much time on the process of fossilization, the connections between paleontology and archaeology, and the latest finds and investigations in early hominid origins and evolution. Students will organize a campus event for Darwin's 200th birthday and make use of the Digital Commons facility on campus. The course will include a trip to a location TBA.

LING 001H, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Associate Professor of English and Honors Coordinator

This course will examine the principles of language use on a variety of levels: individual, societal and cultural. We will explore how people negotiate expectations within their own speech communities and determine how their evaluation of others' speech is impacted by historical, cultural, social, educational, economic, and political factors. The course will also highlight the interdisciplinary nature of language, especially as it relates to anthropology, sociology and cognitive science.

L ST 301H, Sara Whildin, Associate and Head Librarian

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the structure and tools of information retrieval in various disciplines in order to prepare for honors thesis research.

By the end of this course, students should:

1. know how the literature of his/her discipline is organized.
2. be able to use the major information retrieval tools in his/her discipline.
3. conduct an efficient and effective search for information in his/her discipline.
4. identify, select and evaluate information sources in his/her discipline.
5. document information sources in his/her discipline.
6. apply information to solve specific problems in his/her discipline.

YFE 211H, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Associate Professor of English and Honors Coordinator

This course will examine the history, theories and practices of the American Grassroots Social Movement and its impact on Civic Engagement in the last fifty years. Students will explore issues associated with marginalized groups and the role that grassroots organizations have had in giving a 'voice' to these groups. Students will work collaboratively, both in the classroom and in the field, to create their own grassroots 'project.' The course will include a trip to a location TBA.